

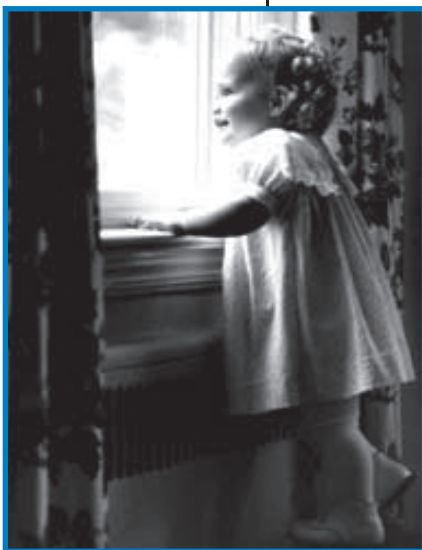


**KING COUNTY
EMERGENCY
MEDICAL
SERVICES**

SMART KIDS! SAFE KIDS! INJURY PREVENTION FUN

FALL 2004

DON'T FALL DOWN ON BEING SAFE



Do you know what the leading cause of injury is for pre-school age children? Believe it or not, it is falls. The rate of falls for preschoolers exceeds poisoning, the number two leading cause of injury, by nearly double. Each year there are nearly 2 million visits to emergency rooms for fall related injuries to children.

Injuries from falls can have significant impact on children and families. The most common types of injuries that children receive from falls are head and spine injuries, broken bones and internal injuries. Some of these injuries can have long lasting effects on the children who receive them. It is clear that preventing falls is the best way to address the problem.

In most cases, caregivers are in control of a child's environment. There are many things that can be done to help reduce a child's risk of falling or receiving an injury from a fall by modifying the child's environment. For example, many caregivers pad sharp corners of tables when their child is learning to walk. This type of environment modification doesn't prevent the child from falling, but it does reduce the chance of injury from a fall.

The most common types of falls are from balconies, windows, trees and furniture. Make sure children are supervised when

on a balcony and that the balcony has adequate railings. Don't let children sit on a railing or a balcony, even if you are there with them. It only takes a second for a child to fall.

Falls from windows are common and can result in serious injuries. Restricting a child's access to open windows is important. Window screens alone will not prevent a child from falling out of a window. Make sure furniture is arranged to create an environment that will reduce a child's risk of falling out the window.

Falls from furniture also cause a number of injuries to young children. Make sure that you never leave a child unattended when the child is sitting on a countertop, changing table, or other relatively high surface. Children also like to climb and this can get them into situations where they can get hurt. Secure things in your home (drawers, etc) to prevent dangerous climbing and find safer activities for the children in your care to explore climbing.

Take some time to take a close look at the places your child spends time. Make sure that precautions have been taken to prevent injuries from falls. By taking time to really look closely at ways to improve a child's safety, you can help make a difference and reduce the number of children that are needlessly hurt or killed by falls or fall related injuries.

**INJURY
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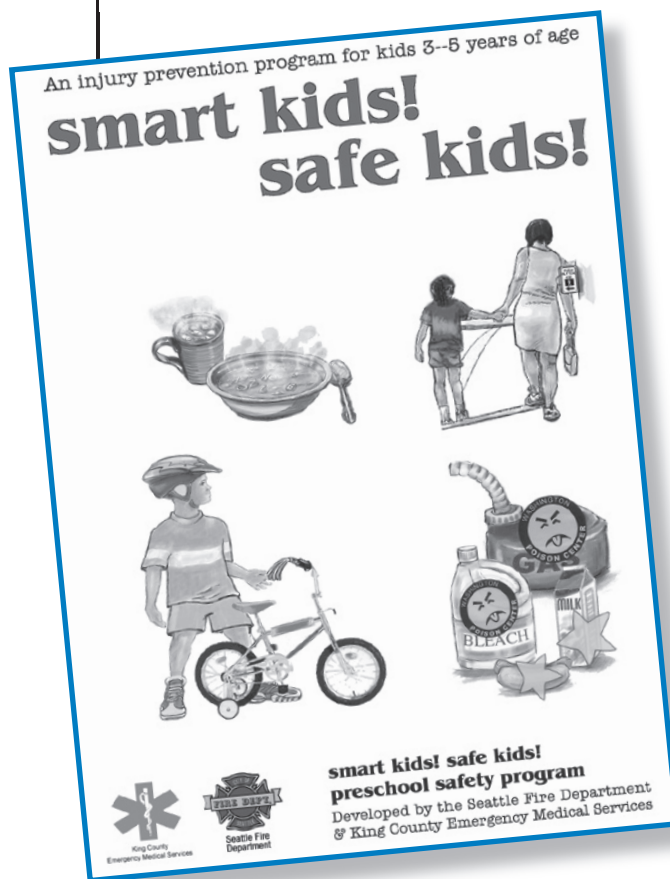
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emsintro.htm](http://www.metrokc.gov/health/ems/emsintro.htm)

SMART KIDS! SAFE KIDS!

SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT A CHILD FROM BEING INJURED IN A FALL

- Arrange furniture to reduce risk of a child falling out of a window
- Never leave children unattended on counters, tables or other relatively high surfaces
- Closely supervise children on balconies and make sure the balconies have adequate railings
- Ensure that the playground equipment used by your child is safe and has an appropriate landing area
- Always supervise children closely when they are playing on playground equipment



SMART KIDS! SAFE KIDS! INJURY PREVENTION PROGRAM

Preschool teachers interested in obtaining this program for use in their classrooms can contact Jamie Fry, Children's Program Coordinator for the Seattle Fire Department, at 206-386-1338. Jamie will come out to your site and give a short overview and training presentation to your teacher(s). At the end of the presentation the curriculum is yours to keep.

RESOURCES

NATIONAL SAFE KIDS

Information on childhood falls and ways to prevent them.

www.safekids.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=1050&folder_id=540

CHILDREN'S VIRTUAL HOSPITAL

Lots of good information on childhood falls, how to prevent them and what to do if they happen.

www.vh.org/pediatric/patient/pediatrics/cqqa/falls.html